CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system for printing postage on a local postage evidencing device using a remote postage account, comprising:

a local postage evidencing device having a local postage account;

at least one remote server system having one or more remote postage accounts; and

a communication link between the local postage evidencing device and the at least one remote server system, wherein postage value is transferred via the communication link to allow users to print postage on the local postage evidencing device.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a postage meter.

3. The system of claim 2 wherein the local postage account is a register that reflects the amount of postage that is currently authorized on the device.

4. The system of claim 1 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a postage dispensing kiosk.

5. The system of claim 4 wherein the local postage account is an amount of postage purchased by a user at the kiosk.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a personal computer coupled to a printer.

7. The system of claim 6 wherein the local postage account is a stored value of postage that has been downloaded from an Internet-based postage service.

8. The system of claim 1 wherein the remote server system comprises:

an Internet-based postage service.

9. The system of claim 1 wherein the remote server system comprises a postage account established by the United States Postal Service.

10. The system of claim 1 wherein the remote server system comprises:
a postage meter.

11. The system of claim 1 wherein the communication link is a wireline connection.

12. The system of claim 1 wherein the remote server system comprises:
a personal computer (PC) coupled to a printer.

13. The system of claim 1 wherein the communication link is a wireless connection.

14. A method of accessing a remote postage account from a local postage evidencing device, comprising:
connecting to a remote postage evidencing system via a local postage evidencing device;
identifying a remote postage account on the remote postage evidencing system that is to be used to print postage on the local postage evidencing device;
selecting a desired postage amount to be printed on the local postage evidencing device;
reducing a balance on the remote postage account; and
printing the desired postage amount on the local postage evidencing device.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising:
printing the desired postage amount on the local postage evidencing device without reducing a balance on the local postage account.

16. The method of claim 14 further comprising:
authenticating a user with the remote postage evidencing system.

17. The method of claim 14 further comprising:
connecting to the remote postage evidencing system using a wireless connection.

18. The method of claim 14 further comprising:
connecting to the remote postage evidencing system using a wireline connection.

19. The method of claim 14 further comprising:

identifying a user to the local postage evidencing device using a biometric input.

20. The method of claim 14 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a postage meter.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the dedicated local postage account is a register that reflects the amount of postage that is currently authorized on the device.

22. The method of claim 14 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a postage dispensing kiosk.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein the dedicated local postage account is an amount of postage purchased by a user at the kiosk.

24. The method of claim 14 wherein the local postage evidencing device is a personal computer coupled to a printer.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein the local postage account is a stored value of postage that has been downloaded from an Internet-based postage service.

25. The method of claim 14 wherein the remote postage evidencing system is an Internet-based postage service.

26. The method of claim 14 wherein the remote postage evidencing system comprises a postage account established by the United States Postal Service.

27.   A computer program product having a computer readable medium having computer program logic recorded thereon for accessing a remote postage account from a local postage evidencing device having a dedicated local postage account, said computer program product comprising:

code for connecting to a remote postage evidencing system via a local postage evidencing device;

code for identifying a remote postage account on the remote postage evidencing system that is to be used to print postage on the local postage evidencing device;

code for selecting a desired postage amount to be printed on the local postage evidencing device; and

code for receiving an authorization from the remote postage evidencing system to print the desired postage amount on the local postage evidencing device.

28.   The computer program product of claim 27 comprising:

code for printing the desired postage amount on the local postage evidencing device without reducing a balance on the local postage account.

29.   The computer program product of claim 27 comprising:

code for authenticating a user with the remote postage evidencing system.

30.   The computer program product of claim 27 comprising:

code for identifying a user to the local postage evidencing device using a biometric input.